

Senator Gerratania, Representative Ritter, Senator Markley, Representative Ritter, and members of the Public Health Committee,

I am writing in opposition to S.B. 10088 as written because, as written.

My sister, who is 66 years old and is profoundly disabled, has been a resident of Southbury Training School for 61 years.

Like you, I have been reading the testimony about this bill, and wanted to consider it before writing to you. The population of STS has been gradually shrinking, but it still consists of long term residents profoundly disabled adults who's health is declining and who are dependent on the care provided by a dedicated, well trained and committed staff who are permanent employees being paid a living wage. The State of Connecticut made a commitment to these clients and their parents and families that can't be lost sight of in the effort to reduce costs. Not long ago the state decided to close the three state mental hospitals without recognizing the true needs of certain groups of residents and too many of those residents became homeless or incarcerated in correctional institutions. Before requiring the development of a plan to close STS the legislature should require the Commissioner to determine the degree to which the needs of the residents can be met in any alternative facilities and the degree to which alternative facilities will need to be enhanced in order to ensure the humane level of care that STS has been able to provide.

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